

# LITTER !

*Litter isn't just ugly; it can have a profound effect on our environment. Litter is defined as any waste that is out of place; it can be man-made or natural such as a discarded apple core. Animals are often interested in our trash; they don't know that it isn't food. They assume that what is in their environment is supposed to be there, so they eat it.*

*Litter such as discarded fishing line and six-pack drink holders can tangle around animals causing almost certain death.*

*Most people who throw apple cores out of their cars think it is biodegradable and won't hurt the environment. Litter attracts animals that come for the food, and they often become road kill or are injured as a result.*

*Trash from streets whether intentionally dropped or that falls out of an overfilled trash receptacle can get washed or blown into the storm drains. The water from the storm drains goes directly into our watersheds.*

*Litter is truly a problem, but individuals can help to reduce litter in their communities. Here are some program ideas for reducing litter in your community:*

## Virginia Naturally

Virginia Naturally always has a calendar of events for cleanups and other environmentally friendly stewardship projects throughout the state. <http://www.vanaturally.com/volunteer.html> or call (804) 698-4550

## Contact Your Local Litter Program Manager

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has a list of regional litter program managers throughout the state. Each litter program is different, and there are different opportunities to get involved in each locality. Are you interested in serving as a "Litter Ambassador" and helping to staff booths at community events? Are you willing to work with a committee to address litter issues in your local area? Do you want to participate in a litter cleanup? Go to the DEQ website and look at the contacts page and contact your local litter program manager <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/recycle/contactlist.html> or call (804) 698-4055.

## Adopt-a-Highway

The Adopt-a-Highway program in Virginia is managed by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Volunteers adopt a stretch of road (usually about two miles) and agree to pick up the road approximately four times a year. Each county has their own Adopt-a-Highway Coordinator. The coordinator will provide you with orange trash bags and vests. VDOT recognizes Adopt-a-Highway volunteers by putting up signs to show that a stretch of road has been adopted. It is important to let VDOT know when you or your group has completed a pick up. These reports are how VDOT knows that you and your group are active volunteers. Or, if you just want to do a one-time pickup, VDOT will be glad to give you the supplies and a temporary permit. To learn more about the Adopt-a-Highway Program, go to: <http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/prog-aah-default.asp> or call 1-800-774-3382.

## Adopt-a-Stream and the Storm Drain Stenciling Program:

The Adopt-a-Stream program is run through the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). A site cleanup along a stream is a lot of work, but DCR has created a manual for someone who is willing to organize a stream cleanup. Another way volunteers serve their community is by making fellow citizens aware of storm water runoff pollution by stenciling storm drains. Many people mistakenly believe that storm water runoff is treated before emptying into nearby waterways. These painted messages remind residents of the link between streets and a waterway's health. It's a community effort with lasting effects. DCR provides free stencils to volunteers to mark storm drains to educate and remind people about the litter that goes straight down the storm drains and into the watersheds. For more information contact the Adopt-a-Stream Coordinator at [adoptastream@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:adoptastream@dcr.virginia.gov) or (804) 692-0903.

## Clean Virginia Waterways

Participate in a Clean Virginia Waterways program. This program organizes annual clean up events as part of the Ocean Conservancy's International coastal clean up. They welcome people who are interested in serving as site captains or people who want to volunteer to be part of a team. <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/iccva.htm> or (434) 395-2602.

## What Else Can You Do?

### Please Cover Your Loads.

There is no way to measure how much of the trash along the sides of the roads is unintentional, but it has been estimated that at least half of the trash along the sides of the roads comes from trash bouncing out of the back of a vehicle. Please keep this in mind when you are going to a convenience or transfer station or a landfill. Pack your lightest items on the bottom of your load and use a cargo net to cover the back so that items don't bounce or blow out of your vehicle. Here are some links to some interesting brochures about load covering:

#### North Carolina:

<http://www.ncdot.org/doh/operations/dp%5Fchief%5Feng/roadside/Beautification/events>

#### Georgia:

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/environmental/pickupbrochure.pdf>

#### South Carolina:

<http://www.palmettopride.org/assets/unsecured%20loads.pdf>

#### Washington State:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0507028.pdf>

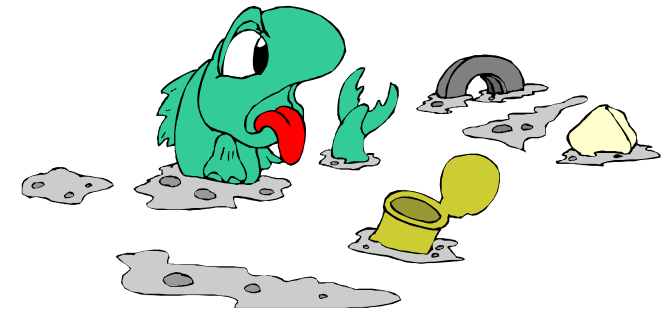
## DO YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

### IF SO, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Ms. Sheila Barnett**  
**Office of Recycling & Litter Prevention**  
**Virginia Department of Environmental Quality**  
**P.O. Box 1105**  
**Richmond, VA 23218**  
**Phone: (804) 698-4055**  
**Email: [smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov)**



## LITTER IS MORE THAN JUST AN EYESORE



## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

